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P.O. Box 3677
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FAX (225) 342-9318

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LOUISIANA STUDENTS LEARNING ON-LINE

Louisiana's college students are "www"dot connected, when it comes to taking course work and pursuing academic degrees on line. According the Louisiana Board of Regents, more students than ever are participating in the Board of Regents Electronic Campus (BOREC).

Commissioner of Higher Education Joe Savoie noted the growing demand for such on-line services is in keeping with national trends. "In today's fast paced world, students need the ability to access courses, faculty and academic support services any time day or night. The convenience and cost effectiveness of these programs have made them popular and I expect us to witness continued expansions in course offerings and support services through electronic media."

The Board of Regents Electronic Campus began in 1998 with only four courses. Today, the BOREC offers more than 500 courses and 13 full degree programs in Louisiana.

"We are most pleased that more than 11,000 students per semester take advantage of offerings through our electronic campus. The beauty of this system is that it uses existing resources and through technology makes on-line courses available to thousands of additional students," said Commissioner of Higher Education, Joe Savoie.

"We have grown a very respectable electronic campus in the state of Louisiana and we are becoming a leader for the nation in terms of this cost-effective approach to building our offerings," said Mike Abbiatti, Associate Commissioner for Information and Learning Technology.

According to Abbiatti, Regents' electronic campus models the highly successful Southern Regional Electronic Campus (SREC), run by the Southern Region Education Board (SREB). The SREC adopts an inclusive design that leverages existing resources rather than creating enormous additional expenses.

That cost-effective approach has been duplicated in Louisiana through what Abbiatti calls a venture capital approach. The state invests \$600,000 each year through the Board of Regents in competitive grants to fund curriculum development and faculty training. This in turn drives the growth of the electronic campus by funding additional course offerings.

ADD ONE
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“This approach to building our electronic campus means that we invest most heavily in our people, not in technology. That is making a real difference,” Savoie said.

Students register at their home campus for the electronic courses. All courses are offered by existing faculty on Louisiana’s college and university campuses. Students interested in gaining more information should visit the distance learning link on the Regent’s website – www.regents.state.la.us.

In addition to a growing electronic campus, the Board of Regents is also involved in a number of pilot programs designed to support the electronic campus. Two no-cost pilots include studies to improve the use of voice and video over the Internet for future course delivery.

Regents is also pursuing a pilot program in on-line tutoring which will make faculty available to assist students enrolled in electronic courses through an electronic tutoring and writing lab, free of charge. That pilot is scheduled to begin in October of this year.